

Mid-term Evaluation of FOODNET

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Abbreviations

ACDI-VOCA	Agricultural Co-operative Development International
APSEC	Agricultural Policy Secretariat, Uganda
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
CIAT	International Centre for Agriculture in the Tropics
CIP	International Potato Centre
CIRAD	Centre for International Co-operation on Agricultural Research and Development (France)
CLAYUCA	Consortium in Latin America for Cassava and Sweet Potato
CLUSA	Co-operative League for United States of America
CMA	Committee for Marketing and Agro-Processing within PMA, Uganda
CMIS	Commodity Market Information Service - UK
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ECAPAPA	Eastern and Central African Programme for Agricultural Policy Analysis
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning System
FOODNET	Marketing and Post-harvest Research Network
IDEA	Investment in Developing Export Agriculture
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
KACE	Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange
KARI	Kenyan Agricultural Research Institute
MDB	Marketing Development Bureau
MIS	Market Information Services
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Development Services, Uganda
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organisation
NARS	National Agricultural Research Systems
NPPs	ASARECA Networks, Programmes, and Projects
NRI	Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, UK
PASAR	Rwandan price information service
PhAction	Post-harvest action, the Global Forum for Post-harvest Research
PMA	Plan for the Modernisation of Agricultural, Uganda
RATES	Regional Agricultural Trade Expansion Support, USAID Project
REDSO-ESA	Regional Development Support Office – Eastern and Southern Africa, USAID
SMEs	Small and medium-scale enterprises
TAFIC	Tanzanian Feed Information Centre
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

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Executive Summary

FOODNET is a crosscutting ASARECA Network focusing on marketing and post-harvest research in Eastern and Central Africa. It is a five-year project, which started in 1999 with funding from USAID-REDSO.

The consultants have been asked to undertake a mid-term evaluation, with the general objective to “carry out a review of FOODNET against the original objectives of the project and suggest the most suitable way forward in the light of the accomplishments so far achieved and the recently endorsed ASARECA consolidated conceptual framework”. Part 1 of the report, which contains the main review, was written by U. Kleih, and Part 2, which contains guidance for the establishment of a Regional Market Information Service (RMIS) based on IGAD experience, was written by I. Imaita.

All in all, FOODNET have been able to produce substantial amounts of high-quality results, in particular in the fields of market information services, market analysis, networking, and training. Especially in Uganda and to some degree in Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Ethiopia, they have been able to build up their own capacity and that of their local partners in these areas.

By introducing marketing elements for priority setting, they have succeeded in making the post-harvest research agenda in the region more demand-driven. This is also reflected in the fact that the private sector and enterprise development minded NGOs are given a higher priority in research as compared to the past. FOODNET have a very good networking capacity. In addition to the traditional ASARECA partners, this includes international organizations, private sector, and NGOs.

Challenges encountered by FOODNET include the difficulty, for various reasons, to cover the full range of ASARECA countries. During their first three years in existence FOODNET have covered a multitude of activities, resulting in some cases in a lack of focus. To a certain degree, this reflects the wide range of the original project priorities. Also, it was indicated that FOODNET sometimes prefer to undertake certain tasks themselves, rather than using partner organizations. Although there was a shift away from the original project focus on enterprise development (with a strong technical element) towards market information and analysis, in hindsight this seems a logical step given that it would have been difficult to implement the former without a clear understanding of marketing opportunities. As far as FOODNET's partner organizations are concerned, despite a shift in thinking, local NARS partners have yet to fully adopt a demand-driven (i.e. market oriented) approach to research.

In view of the above and considering the priorities of the funding agency, which has a strong emphasis on regional agricultural trade, it is recommended that **future FOODNET focus** be on the following activities:

- The setting up and running of a Regional Market Information Service (RMIS) covering the COMESA Region, in collaboration with FEWSNET, and possibly IGAD;
- Market Analysis focussing on, (a) regional trade flows in selected commodities, and (b) raw material requirements of major agro-industries. These studies should include repackaged information on regional and international trade policies (e.g. tariffs);
- Facilitatory / brokerage role between regional partners (e.g. private sector, NGOs, NARS, ASARECA Networks). The formation of regional trader and agro-industry associations should be considered in this context;
- Training of partners at regional level in areas related to MIS, and market analysis. This training can also take place as part of wider enterprise development courses conducted in collaboration with other partners.

The justification of the future focus is that FOODNET have achieved most in these areas, and it is therefore recommended that this expertise be harnessed at a regional level. In the future, Commodity Networks will have a stronger post-harvest emphasis as part of the new ASARECA Conceptual Framework. Due to globalization and other factors, regional and international trade is increasingly being recognized as a vehicle for poverty alleviation. This is also reflected in donor policies.

Issues requiring addressing, in view of the above:

- Establishment of new FOODNET goal, purpose, objectives, and work-plan;
- Formalized agreement between Funding and Implementing Agencies on new FOODNET focus and work-plan until the end of 2004;
- Establishment of medium- to long-term strategy for FOODNET by FOODNET management and ASARECA partners, including discussion of the most appropriate long-term institutional home of FOODNET;
- Discussion and agreement between Funding and Implementing Agencies on medium- to long-term future of FOODNET;
- Change of FOODNET Steering Committee composition;
- Human resources of FOODNET;
- Future location of FOODNET;
- Development of an exit strategy for the Uganda based Market Information Service which is currently housed with FOODNET;
- The role of FOODNET grants.

If FOODNET want to borrow from IGAD's Market Information System (MIS) model when setting up a Regional MIS, then they must ensure that the following are in place: user need survey, national MISs in the ten countries, re-thought of the original role and objectives of FOODNET, and memorandum of understanding. Challenges encountered by the IGAD MIS include: weak National MISs resulting in weak regional MIS, private sector venture into MIS, and non-price information.

PART I

Introduction

The two Consultants have been asked to undertake a mid-term review of FOODNET during the first half of September 2002. This comprised a two-week involvement by Mr Ulrich Kleih (team leader) in both Uganda and Kenya, and a one-week involvement by Mr Isaiah Imita (regional consultant) in Kenya. It was agreed that Mr Kleih should concentrate on the review of FOODNET as such, whereas Mr Imita would concentrate on the IGAD regional Market Information Service (MIS) as a model for the potential Regional MIS to be developed by FOODNET in partnership with other stakeholders. As a consequence, the report is sub-divided into two main parts, i.e. Part 1 comprises the main review, and Part 2 the IGAD experience.

The general objective of this mid-term evaluation was to “carry out a review of FOODNET against the original objectives of the project and suggest the most suitable way forward in the light of the accomplishments so far achieved and the recently endorsed ASARECA consolidated conceptual framework”. Specific objectives include:

- Analysis of the FOODNET strategy from establishment to the latest revisions in strategic directions,
- Review of the project portfolio that FOODNET funded under the competitive and commissioned grant schemes,
- Evaluation of the quality of work produced by FOODNET,
- Evaluation of the networking capacity of FOODNET,
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the training that has been developed by FOODNET,
- In regard to future direction, analysis of the conceptual framework that was submitted to REDSO in May 2002,
- Summary of comments of stakeholders,
- Analysis of the planned scope of the work, in relation to impact achieved and future potential impact.

Appendix 3 contains the full text of the Terms of Reference for the evaluation.

Background to Project

The FOODNET project, whose institutional home is the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture at the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Center in Uganda (IITA – ESARC), effectively started to operate in September 1999 with funding of USAID – REDSO (Regional Economic Development Services Office for East and Southern Africa). FOODNET, which has a cross-cutting role as part of the ASARECA networks, was conceived as a five-year, US\$2.5 million project.

The original, full, title of the FOODNET project was “Post-harvest and Marketing Research Network for Eastern and Central Africa”. The following section recalls the goal, purpose, and objectives of the project as stipulated in the original project proposal.

Goal: Strengthening regional capacity in value added, agro-enterprise technologies for increased income, improved nutrition and sustainable food security in Eastern and Central Africa.

Project purpose: To identify market opportunities for existing and novel, value added products, and optimize appropriate post-harvest technologies to enhance the income generating capacity of small and medium-scale entrepreneurs from the private sector and promote products to improve nutrition.

Project Objectives:

1. Enterprise Development
 - 1.1 Identify market opportunities for increased sales of value added products;
 - 1.2 Identify genes governing nutritional / processing quality for germplasm enhancement;
 - 1.3 Identify, adapt and promote improved post-harvest technologies with private sector partners;
 - 1.4 Diversify product range from locally available crops for market expansion and improved nutrition.
2. Capacity Building
 - 2.1 Provide training to strengthen the capacity of the Network to deliver profitable agro-enterprises;
 - 2.2 Develop post-harvest information systems for increased access, flow and exchange of information;
 - 2.3 Catalyze the process of change from production to market oriented research in partnership with the ASARECA networks and private sector partners;
 - 2.4 Enhance local, regional, inter-centre and international co-operation in post-harvest activities.

From its outset the objectives of this project were challenging in that they tried to cover a wide range of areas related to enterprise development including marketing, post-harvest technologies, product development and nutrition.

Within the first year of its existence the project shifted towards a stronger focus on marketing and related services as demonstrated in the new Goal, Purpose, and Outputs, as agreed at the 15th meeting of the ASARECA CD, Nairobi, 16-18 November 2000, namely:

New Goal. To contribute to sustainable agricultural development by enhancing trade and providing access to new value-added market opportunities.

New Purpose. Effective market oriented strategies institutionalized and services provided to stakeholders in ECA zone.

New Outputs:

- Output 1 Functional partnerships established and strengthened
- Output 2 Methods and technologies developed, availed and evaluated
- Output 3 Support services provided for improved decision making, advocacy and action
- Output 4 Stakeholder and organizational capacity enhanced
- Output 5 Information and communication services and management improved

In hindsight, this shift in emphasis appears logical given the need to identify marketing opportunities before enterprise development and technology transfer can be started. Nevertheless, despite the shift, the overall range of objectives remained wide.

In addition to the USAID-REDSO funding, FOODNET were able to attract funding from other sources in order to implement their activities (i.e. ACDI/VOCA, CTA, and more recently the Ugandan NAADS). Although, in some respect, this may look contentious to the original funding agency, it also transpires that the ASARECA Secretariat encourages its Networks to diversify their funding portfolio as a strategy to safeguard their longer-term existence. In this report, all the main FOODNET activities will be reviewed irrespective of their funding source.

As at early 2002, based on ASARECA categories, FOODNET was active in the following areas:

	No of activities
• Studies (trade based)	3
• Surveys (market analysis)	23
• Research (product development)	4
• Development (agro-enterprise)	12
• Training (marketing and agro-enterprise)	6
• Backstopping (regional / global fora)	3
• Agri-business support services	5

Source: Annual report for the third NPP Consultative Meeting 13 – 17 May 2002.

The following section provides an assessment of the achievements and the way forward for the following main FOODNET work areas:

1. Market information services
2. Market analysis
3. Trade analysis
4. Enterprise Development
5. Training
6. Other areas of FOODNET activities

FOODNET's Main Areas of Work: Achievements and Way Forward

Market Information Services (MIS)

FOODNET have acquired substantial expertise and experience in the field of Market Information Services (MIS), which is in particular reflected in the Ugandan MIS. The latter has components operating at national (macro) and local (micro) levels. The macro-MIS in Uganda was initiated in 1998/99 mainly with funding from ACDI / VOCA when the previous Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry based MIS became defunct. In addition, FOODNET obtained technical assistance from CTA when designing the MIS.

FOODNET succeeded in establishing the new Ugandan MIS within a relatively short period of time thus assuring that there was no serious gap in the availability of agricultural market information required by policy decision makers, donors, traders, and farmers.

The FOODNET MIS currently in existence in Uganda is appreciated by both Government and donors alike. It is based on a well-established network of collectors of trade information and dissemination media (i.e. web, radio, written bulletins, and the mobile telephone network using paid-for SMS messages) primarily targeting the trading and farming sectors. Nevertheless, it was also indicated by a few stakeholders that the MIS could benefit from further refining of data collection methods, and improved dissemination of information to the local level in some parts of the country.

In addition to the Ugandan Macro MIS, FOODNET are providing inputs into MISs in Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia. For example, in Tanzania FOODNET have hired a local data processing specialist who is based in the Marketing Development Bureau (MDB). The support to the Kenyan Agricultural Commodity Exchange (KACE) led to the inclusion of livestock related data in the latter's Market Information Service. These inputs start to yield results, in that, for example, the data of three countries can be accessed on the current FOODNET website. This represents the first step towards the creation of a Regional Market Information Service (RMIS).

In addition, collaborative links with an EU funded MIS in Rwanda include the provision of technical support, and the Ethiopian Grain Market Information System is currently being supported with a competitive grant.

As for the Micro-MIS, this is primarily based on initiatives involving rural FM radio stations in parts of Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. Local Government or NGO staff play the link role between farming communities, the radio stations and the national (i.e. Macro) MIS. The initiatives appear to be well appreciated by local farming communities and other local partners in the areas covered. The reaction amongst traders was mixed given that small-scale intermediaries are likely to lose out due to improved farmer bargaining power. At the same time, larger-scale traders seem prepared to use the Micro-

MIS to get in contact with farmers thereby reducing transaction costs. In addition to technical inputs, CTA also provided financial support to the Micro MIS in Uganda.

In September 2002, the Ugandan NAADS (National Agricultural Advisory Services) have agreed to fund the IITA FOODNET Market Information Service Unit over a six-month period, involving tasks such as preparation and broadcasting of radio programmes, development of media strategy, expansion of MIS to NAADS priority districts, and training of farming communities in collective marketing.

Overall, FOODNET have succeeded in placing macro- and micro-level Market Information Services (MIS) firmly on the agenda of Government priorities in Uganda. In addition, they have acquired valuable experience with cost recovery mechanism in MIS. As for challenges related to MIS, the latter depend on dynamic local partners on the ground, and they are in danger of waning if often only moderate amounts of funds are not available.

Way forward. In view of the priorities of USAID-REDSO (i.e. the Funding Agency) and the ASARECA Conceptual Framework (i.e. regional orientation of capacity building), it is recommended that FOODNET focus during the remaining two years of the project on the establishment of a Regional MIS (RMIS) potentially to be hosted by COMESA. Given the expertise gained at national level, FOODNET is well placed to achieve this goal.

FOODNET have started to forge a strategic partnership with FEWSNET in order to complement their own expertise. The advantage of this partnership is that FEWSNET already has offices in the majority of COMESA countries, and can provide information related to issues such as food aid deliveries, and crop production forecasts. In this context, it is important to bear in mind that this type of information is frequently requested by traders involved in marketing of staple crops and other agricultural commodities.

The success of a Regional Market Information Service (RMIS) is dependent on the quality of the participating national MISs. Whereas some countries already have relatively well-established MISs (e.g. Kenya and Tanzania, in part due to FOODNET inputs) others are likely to require more strengthening. In addition to FOODNET resources, inputs from other sources are likely to be required. In this context, FOODNET Management have demonstrated in Uganda their capability to access funding from various donor sources. Also, they have established an excellent network of international MIS experts should technical back-up be required (e.g. CTA, FAO).

For more information regarding the establishment of regional MISs, please consult Part 2 of this document.

As far as human resources of FOODNET are concerned, it appears that an additional, experienced, staff will be required to assist in setting up the Regional Market Information System. This is mainly due to the commitments of the current IITA/FOODNET market

information specialists in Uganda in relation to the aforementioned MIS projects which are funded by ACDI / VOCA and NAADS.

Regarding the future of the macro and micro MISs initiated in Uganda it appears pertinent for FOODNET to phase out of this activity. In the short-term this may require a transition period (say 6 to 12 months) during which new institutional solutions have to be sought. Possible options include keeping a branch office in Kampala, if FOODNET HQ were to be relocated to Nairobi¹. In the medium- to long-term a new institutional home needs to be found, considering options such as IITA-ESARC, NAADS, or ACDI / VOCA. If this proves unworkable, then the transformation of the MIS into an NGO or private company should be considered, thereby safeguarding the autonomy of the Service.

Last but not least, given the wealth of experience and expertise acquired by FOODNET in the field of macro and micro market information services, it appears that other countries would benefit from the publication of this material.

Market Analysis

Market analysis is the second major area where FOODNET have been able to generate substantial amounts of knowledge and outputs. By mid-2002, 23 studies were produced in this category.²

Part of these studies were conducted by FOODNET staff themselves (i.e. often in collaboration with international organisations for learning purposes) and part of them by network partners (e.g. NARS using grant funds). The country and commodity range of these studies varies considerably. Nevertheless, the majority of studies focus on national markets of roots and tubers in Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya and Tanzania, although markets for niche commodities were also analysed (e.g. shea nuts). At the same time, it is evident that since 2002 FOODNET are moving towards a sector approach and a wider geographic coverage (e.g. regional studies on poultry, maize, potato, and banana).

The quality of the studies varies considerably. Some of the studies are quite comprehensive notably those prepared by FOODNET staff in collaboration with consultants, others (e.g. by some NARS partners) lack depth.

On the institutional side, FOODNET activities have initiated a shift towards a more demand – driven approach to research involving private sector and NGOs. Although

¹ Pro-arguments for relocation to Nairobi include, (a) reduced transaction costs and time in travel to partner countries, (b) direct access to major traders in the region, the largest of whom are based in Nairobi, and (c) probably most importantly, direct access to implementing partners for the regional MIS including FEWSNET, RATES, Trade HUB, WFP, Relief agencies, NGO HQs and REDSO.

Con arguments may be related to the following questions, (d) is Nairobi the best location for IITA staff ? (e) how will a move affect on-going FOODNET activities in Uganda? and (f), what are the cost implications of a relocation?

² Annual report for the third NPP Consultative Meeting 13 – 17 May 2002.

some of the traditionally, technically, orientated NARS partners appeared to have had qualms with this approach at the beginning, they seem to have accepted the need to analyze market conditions before embarking on the development of new products or technologies.

Way forward. It is recommended that FOODNET continue this activity, placing more emphasis on current and potential regional trade flows. To some extent this is already happening, however more similar activities need to be undertaken.

It is important that FOODNET focus on selected key commodities. As for niche markets (e.g. medicinal plants), repackaging of information available from other sources or linking users with these sources ought to be the priority in the short-term. At the same time, it is important to recall that FOODNET partners have generated valuable knowledge of the markets of some commodities previously not considered main-stream (e.g. domestic and export markets of dried fruit produced in Kenya and Uganda). As a consequence, once there is good knowledge of the principal markets (e.g. the COMESA maize markets), this category of high potential commodities should be considered in a next step.

Given the amount of work required in this field (i.e. geographically and commodity wise), it is recommended that FOODNET either hire one additional, experienced, staff in the area of market analysis, or use consultants with regional experience. Amongst others, qualified individuals are likely to be available in the market research industry. Also, FOODNET may be able to draw on the recently hired FEWSNET economist.

As for their own training, it appears that FOODNET staff would benefit from refining their skills already acquired (e.g. in forecasting methods). As for the provision of training by FOODNET, regional partners such as NARIs and NGOs require more training and exposure to market analysis and identification of opportunities. The recently initiated shift towards the creation of longer-term training approaches (e.g. with NGOs such as CRS) is a step in the right direction.

The dissemination of research findings can be improved. Although the reports of the majority of FOODNET activities are presented on their website, there is the danger that over-reliance on the internet may prevent potential users from accessing the information. Reasons for this include the proliferation of websites and clients not finding enough time to browse for documents. Also, the down-loading and printing of long documents can be a daunting experience under many circumstances. As a result, it is suggested that FOODNET also publish and disseminate hard copies of relevant material to potential users. Such an exercise is also likely to raise the profile of FOODNET since some stakeholders (e.g. Government officials requiring studies in this field for decision making) apparently are not fully aware of the studies carried out.

An additional area where improvements can be made is the follow-up to market analyses. Usually, these studies tend to generate substantial amounts of interest amongst industries

surveyed. Unfortunately, this interest tends to wane if there are no follow-up activities (e.g. workshops or seminars) within the short-term on the issues raised.

Trade Analysis

The main piece of work by FOODNET in this area is a study undertaken in collaboration with CTA on the impact of globalisation on agriculture in Eastern and Central Africa. Amongst other things, the findings of this work were used as the basis for a recently published Government of Uganda Strategy for Marketing and Agro-processing within the PMA framework, and the report was also summarized in a very relevant article in the ASARECA AgriForum No 19. Also, Government officials (e.g. Uganda) show interest in this study for their decision-making.

Way forward. Although the area of trade policy is very important for the future of African agriculture, FOODNET does not appear to have a comparative advantage to undertake studies in this field. It is therefore recommended that in the future FOODNET will concentrate on repackaging of information from existing trade policy studies and incorporate the findings into market analyses targeting the regional trading sector.

Nevertheless, FOODNET also appears to be well placed to play the role of an intermediary for trade policy related concerns raised by the private sector. Related messages concerning regional and international trade issues should be transmitted to relevant projects (e.g. USAID RATES), regional bodies such as COMESA, or policy research institutions (e.g. IFPRI, CTA, and ECAPAPA), which can take it up at a higher level.

Enterprise Development

As indicated above, the original FOODNET objectives had a strong focus upon enterprise development and related technical aspects.

FOODNET can offer some success stories in the field of enterprise development, notably the recent interest shown by the Ugandan brewing industry in testing and using cassava as a raw material in beer production, and the formation of the Tanzanian Feed Information Centre (TAFIC). The latter, which receives business support through FOODNET and its partners (e.g. training related to animal feed technology), is testing the use of sweet potatoes, cassava, and quality protein maize for feed rations.

Other ongoing initiatives funded by competitive grants include support to SMEs in Tanzania (e.g. extrusion of root crops) and Uganda (e.g. manufacturing of potato based snack-foods) to purchase equipment in other continents (e.g. Latin America) and test it in their enterprises. These interesting, recently started, initiatives are yet to yield results.

Community-based initiatives appear to lack success. Reasons for this include, amongst other things, lack of technical FOODNET staff to provide the often considerable amount

of follow-up required to support these projects, and the issue of which scale of industry to target (i.e. small-scale vs. medium to large-scale agro-industries).

Way forward. It is recommended that in the future FOODNET primarily concentrate on a facilitatory role in enterprise development using partners such as commodity based ASARECA Networks, FEWSNET, NGOs, and CIAT's Agro-enterprise project. In addition, FOODNET should attempt to develop regional capacity in this field (e.g. Formation of regional trader and agro-industry associations).

In future, FOODNET should avoid technical backstopping of enterprise development, which should be handed over to commodity networks. The latter will have a stronger post-harvest focus as part of the new ASARECA Conceptual Framework.

Also, FOODNET should avoid getting involved in credit activities including loan guarantee schemes, given that it lacks experience in this field. However, FOODNET is well positioned to play the role of a facilitator between potential borrowers and lenders such as banks or micro-finance institutions.

Training

FOODNET have provided training at regional, national, and local levels, in:

- Enterprise Development. In collaboration with CIAT and SARRNET, FOODNET have developed and delivered an enterprise development course targeting regional partners. As part of this course, which is based on material developed by CIAT in Latin America, FOODNET tend to concentrate on marketing and market information aspects.
- At the request of NAADS in Uganda, a similar course was delivered to Local Government officials in Kabale District.
- Market Information Services. This included advice and technical support to market information specialists involved in MISs in countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda. A regional course on market information services is planned for October 2002 in Nairobi.
- Market analysis. FOODNET have organized training courses in this field for their network partners drawing on international organizations such as CIRAD, CIP, and CIAT. In addition, training on the job of FOODNET staff and members of NARS by international organizations (e.g. NRI) took place as part of collaborative studies.
- Website design. In collaboration with Africa-Link, FOODNET has trained 37 clients from the region, including all the NPPs and the NARS to develop or upgrade their websites.

- Study tours (e.g. study tour to Vietnam for agro-processors and NARS members of the region).

In general, comments received on FOODNET training were very positive. Also, some of the ASARECA networks appear to count on further training by FOODNET in enterprise development and website design / maintenance.

Some of the training activities were undertaken at a local government level (e.g. to support NAADS activities in Kabale District in Uganda). Apparently, the material presented at that level was difficult to understand by some workshop participants due to the mixed ability of the group. Clearly, interest by the Government's new agency for extension in issues related to marketing and enterprise development is something to be encouraged, but FOODNET should ensure that the training is targeted at a level which is suitable, i.e. at a higher level to train trainers, rather than attempting to deal with local agency staff.

Way forward. It is recommended that FOODNET continue training of regional partners (i.e. National MISs, NGOs, private sector, NARS) focussing on market information services (MIS) and market analysis. The recently started longer-term approach of learning alliances is a step in the right direction.

FOODNET should continue to draw in international support in training exercises, as and when required. This is based on good relationships with organisations such as CIAT, CIRAD, CTA, and FAO.

As for website design, there seems to be demand for further training by network partners and maintenance of sites in this area. To some extent this needs to be encouraged, however there is a danger of over-committing the FOODNET webmaster.

Some of the younger FOODNET staff may benefit from up-grading of their teaching skills (e.g. up-dating of presentation methods).

In the future, FOODNET should avoid getting involved in too many dispersed training activities at a 'lower' level (e.g. local government level).

Other Areas of FOODNET Activities

Participation in International Forums. FOODNET is participating in international forums such as *PhAction* (i.e. the Global Post-Harvest Forum), the newsletter of which is co-edited by the FOODNET Coordinator. The latter's active involvement has certainly helped to give the ECA post-harvest sector more prominence in the international arena.

Also, FOODNET forms part of INPhO, the FAO post-harvest web site consortium.

Grants. The sub-committee of the FOODNET Steering Committee in charge of project selection for grant funding represents a mix of regional stakeholders including donor

agency, NARS members, NGOs, and project representatives. Project selection follows well-established procedures.

The first round of competitive grant based research projects was undertaken in 2000/01 (i.e. 20 projects, mostly worth \$14,000) and a second round is currently underway (i.e. 20 projects worth \$5,000 to \$50,000). The first round of projects had a strong emphasis on identifying marketing opportunities, whereas the second round focuses more on technology transfer as part of enterprise development. Also, the second round of grant projects shows a stronger presence of the private sector and NGOs.

As for the quality of the outputs of grant funded projects this has been assessed on the basis of mostly web based reports available as at September 2002. This primarily concerns reports of the first round of projects, but also one progress report of round two.

The reviewer concludes that by and large the quality of the reports can be placed into the following categories:

- One third of outputs are of good quality,
- One third are of average quality, and
- One third are either of poor quality or no results are available as at September 2002.

Unsurprisingly, the studies which have received more support and technical back-up were likely to perform better. Reasons why some projects have received only little or no support include, lack of staff available to undertake this often onerous task, communication problems with some countries, and the fact that some project implementers preferred to undertake their work without external guidance.

Networking. Since their inception in 1999, FOODNET have been able to establish an extensive network of partners, in addition to the “traditional” ASARECA network community (i.e. NARS institutes with a post-harvest orientation, and the commodity based Networks). The “new” partners include private sector companies, donor agencies, projects, NGOs, and international research institutions (e.g. CTA, CIRAD, GTZ, NRI). This is reflected in FOODNET’s excellent ability to attract additional donor funds or complement their own skill base when required to undertake activities such as surveys or training.

Also, FOODNET have been quite active during the last year to forge strategic alliances in order to complement their own information base at regional level (e.g. with FEWSNET) or to initiate long-term learning initiatives (e.g. with CRS).

This networking ability will certainly help them to play an active role as a regional facilitator / broker in linking different private sector partners, but also research institutions and NGOs to the benefit of enhanced agricultural trade and food security in sub-Saharan Africa.

Web design. FOODNET are using the internet and their well established web site as their main form of communication. In this respect they are playing a leading and well

appreciated role amongst their ASARECA partners. The recently recruited, FAO funded, FOODNET webmaster is likely to require one or two more months to polish their revamped website before embarking on outside activities such as the maintenance of ASARECA commodity network web sites.

Although the promotion of electronic media is certainly a step in the right direction, there is also the danger that certain types of important information may not be noticed. In some cases it was pointed out that stakeholders were not fully aware of what FOODNET had to offer on their web site. This could be avoided through targeted production and dissemination of printed material.

Overview: FOODNET Successes and Challenges

Successes

Owing to the dynamic approach of its Coordinator and his team, FOODNET have been able to produce substantial amounts of high-quality results, notably in the fields of market information services, market analysis, networking, and training.

In particular in Uganda and to some degree in Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Ethiopia, they have been able to build up their own capacity and that of their local partners in these areas.

By introducing marketing elements for priority setting, they have succeeded in making the post-harvest research agenda in the region more demand-driven. This is also reflected in the fact that the private sector and enterprise development minded NGOs are given a higher priority in research as compared to the past.

FOODNET have a very good networking capacity. In addition to the traditional ASARECA partners, this includes international organizations, private sector, and NGOs.

Challenges

FOODNET find it difficult to cover the full range of ASARECA countries. Partner organizations from countries such as DRC, Eritrea, Madagascar and Sudan have relatively little interaction with FOODNET, and those from Burundi, Djibouti, Somalia practically none at all. This is due to communication problems, conflict situations, or weak institutional base of NARIs in these countries.

During their first three years FOODNET have covered a multitude of activities, which could be interpreted as a lack of focus. However, to a certain degree, this reflects the range of the original project priorities, which may have been too wide. Also, the funding agency appreciates that due to the experimental nature of FOODNET the donor encouraged the network to explore a number of possible avenues of cross-cutting support,

in order to be in a position to select a more effective regional position and strategy. This review process is therefore a fair means of evaluating the full range of activities undertaken and using this analysis to determine where the project should focus in future.

Also, it was indicated that FOODNET sometimes prefer to undertake certain tasks themselves rather than using partner organizations, which in turn would have contributed to capacity building. To some extent, this may reflect a misunderstanding of the project objectives, or the fact that no local partners were available who could have undertaken relevant tasks.

Although there was a shift away from the original project focus on enterprise development (i.e. with strong technical elements), towards market information and analysis, in hindsight this seems a logic step given that it would have been difficult to implement the former without a clear understanding of marketing opportunities.

As far as FOODNET's partner organisations are concerned, local NARS partners have yet to fully adopt a demand-driven (i.e. market oriented) approach to research. Despite a shift in thinking, there still appears to be a bias towards technical disciplines at the expense of marketing, economics and social issues.

Way Forward and Issues Requiring Addressing

Future FOODNET Focus

In view of the above and considering the priorities of the funding agency which has a strong emphasis on regional agricultural trade, it is recommended that future FOODNET focus be on the following activities:

- The setting up and running of a Regional Market Information Services (RMIS) covering the COMESA Region, in collaboration with FEWSNET, and possibly IGAD. The design of a RMIS needs to take into account its institutional and financial long-term sustainability.
- Market Analysis focussing on, (a) regional trade flows in selected commodities, and (b) raw material requirements of major agro-industries. These studies should include repackaged information on regional and international trade policies (e.g. tariffs).
- Facilitatory / brokerage role between regional partners (e.g. private sector, NGOs, NARS, ASARECA Networks). FOODNET is well placed to link agro-industries with new sources of raw materials, as well as research institutions and NGOs active in enterprise development. The formation of regional trader and agro-industry associations should be considered in this context.

- Training of partners at regional level in areas related to MIS, and market analysis. This training can take place as part of wider enterprise development courses conducted in collaboration with other partners (e.g. CIAT, CRS, CIRAD).

Justification of Future Focus

- FOODNET has achieved most in these areas, and it is recommended that this expertise be harnessed at a regional level;
- In the future, Commodity Networks will have a stronger post-harvest emphasis as part of the new ASARECA Conceptual Framework.
- Due to globalization and other factors, regional and international trade is increasingly being recognized as a vehicle for poverty alleviation. This is also reflected in donor policies.

Issues Requiring Addressing

- **Establishment of new FOODNET goal, purpose, and objectives.** Following this, a new work plan needs to be established covering the period until the end of 2004. The new FOODNET mandate should reflect its new focus which places more emphasis on marketing and trade related issues rather than enterprise development and post-harvest processing. This move away from the original mandate needs to be seen in the context of the recently endorsed ASARECA Consolidated Conceptual Framework which allocates more responsibility in the latter areas to the commodity networks.
- **Formalised agreement** between Funding and Implementing Agencies on new FOODNET focus and work-plan until the end of 2004;
- **Establishment of medium- to long-term strategy for FOODNET.** This needs to involve FOODNET management and ASARECA partners, and should include discussion of the future home of FOODNET. It is recommended to continue with the existing institutional arrangement until the end of the current project (i.e. IITA remains the Implementing Agency until September 2004). It needs to be explored to what extent FOODNET may be better placed within a different arrangement beyond that date (e.g. similar to ECAPAPA, under the ASARECA Secretariat).
- **Discussion and agreement between Funding and Implementing Agencies on medium- to long-term future of FOODNET.** Points to be discussed and decided include future institutional home, thematic areas to be covered, financial commitment of donor.

- **Change of FOODNET Steering Committee composition.** It is recommended that some post-harvest oriented NARS members join the steering committees of the Commodity Networks, and that the FOODNET Steering Committee includes in the future at least two representatives of regional trader or agro-industry associations.
- **Human resources of FOODNET.** Given their existing commitments in Uganda, which are funded through other sources, FOODNET will require one (MIS Specialist), possibly two (MIS Specialist and Market Analyst), additional technical staff to work at regional level. Extra administrative support staff may be required depending on the location of the new FOODNET office. FOODNET staff who are currently on a national salary scale in Uganda have expressed their concern that increased responsibilities should also be reflected in financial remuneration (i.e. upgrade to a 'regional' IITA salary scale).
- **Future location of FOODNET.** Given that the network has achieved most in Uganda and that Kampala cannot be considered a regional hub in agricultural trade, it is recommended that FOODNET be relocated. Nairobi is a possible alternative. Good links with COMESA HQ (not only in electronic form) will be required if that organization will host the Regional Market Information System. However, this also needs to be discussed with FOODNET's parent organisation (i.e. IITA). Also, it needs to be recognised that according to his own estimates the FOODNET Coordinator already spends 50% of his time in Nairobi.
- **Development of exit strategy for the Uganda based Market Information Services which are currently housed with FOODNET.** This will require a transition period (i.e. 6 – 12 months) with the possibility of a FOODNET branch office in Kampala housing them in the interim. Potential longer-term institutional homes of these MISs include IITA-ESARC, NAADS, or ACIDI / VOCA. If these options fail, then the transformation of the Ugandan MIS into a separate legal entity should be considered (e.g. NGO, or private company).
- **The role of FOODNET grants** needs to be reconsidered in view of the new tasks. Given the mixed results of competitive grants, it is recommended that more emphasis be placed in the future on commissioned grants. The size of the grants may require increasing if relevant activities are to cover several countries. Commodity based Networks should play a stronger role in implementing the current round of FOODNET grant projects, in particular where technology transfer is involved.
- The ASARECA Secretariat queried the origins of **the term FOODNET** in that it does not represent an abbreviation of the original project title, as is the case with other networks. Given that FOODNET has now become a well-established "brand name" at least in Uganda and to some extent also in other parts of the ECA region, it appears advantageous to use this name in the longer-term. Nevertheless, this issue should be discussed between the FOODNET Coordinator and the ASARECA Secretariat when establishing a long-term strategy for this network.

PART II

Foodnet as a Regional Project – Lessons to be Learned from the IGAD MIS

If FOODNET want to borrow from IGAD's Market Information System (MIS) model, then they must ensure that the following are in place:

- User need survey
- National MIS in the ten countries
- Re-thought of the original role and objectives of FOODNET.
- Memorandum of understanding

1. The objectives of the IGAD MIS are to;

- a) Improve market transparency at the national, regional and international level;
- b) Promote regional trade and economic co-operation;
- c) Provide market information as an indicator for food security.

To achieve these objectives, the following main outputs were envisaged:

- I. Institutional Framework for the MIS established;
- II. A System for acquisition, transmission management and interpretation of market information developed;
- III. Staff trained on analysis and dissemination of market data and information;
- IV. Technical and Operational manuals produced and distributed;
- V. Regular and timely market information provided;

2. Summary of Main Achievements to Date:

Output I. Institutional framework for the MIS established

- **Djibouti:** MIS Unit, Ministry of Agriculture. The Project assisted in the creation of the Unit.
- **Eritrea:** Eritrean Grain Board
- **Ethiopia:** Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise
- **Kenya:** Market Information Branch, Ministry of Agriculture
- **Sudan:** Marketing Unit, Ministry of Agriculture
- **Uganda:** Market News Unit, Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industries.
- **Somalia:** there was no government in Somalia to facilitate collaboration.

Output II. A System for acquisition, transmission management and interpretation of market information developed

The National Market Information Services (NMISs) collect wholesale/ retail prices in selected markets. Initially, receipt of market price data/information from the NMIS agencies was problematic, time consuming, expensive and unreliable for effective use. In tackling this problem, the Project developed a database management system (DBMS 2000) for use by all participating institutions of the network. This initiative was further enhanced by the creation of a regional Web Site (www.igadmis.net) with a separate Home Page for each NMIS. The Web Site and the common Data Base Management System resulted in a highly efficient means of information sharing and exchange that is unprecedented at least in the Horn of Africa. The NMISs are capable of uploading the price data/information onto the Web Site at any time of their convenience. Most of them are uploading data on weekly basis while some are posting it on a daily basis. This has created an efficient way of exchange of data/information between the NMISs as well as means for wider dissemination of this important information on the Web.

Output III. Staff trained on analysis and dissemination of market data and information

The following training activities were conducted:

1. Basic Computer Training.
2. Database Management System (DMBS 2000) Training.
3. Advanced MS Access Training and web design.
4. Desktop Publishing.

Output IV. Technical and operational manuals produced

Documentation on the MIS2000 database was produced and distributed to the NMISs.

Output V. Regular and timely market information provided

The NMISs are posting their market prices regularly on a weekly basis on the Project Web Site. Also, the Project produced a **Regional Market Information Bulletin** on a quarterly basis.

3. Challenges

Weak National MISs result in weak regional MIS

- a) Weak Data acquisition
- b) Weak Transmission
- c) Weak Market analysis
- d) Weak Trade analysis

Private sector venture into MIS

The private sector needs to be encouraged and developed to take over from the public sector. However the following needs to be considered:

- a) Commercial enterprises like horticulture – Farmers and traders involved with export of horticulture would be interested to buy credible market information. But there is no existing system.
- b) Food crops – This is challenging because traders dealing with food crops would not like the market to be transparent. But farmers, who are mostly small scale, lack market information.
- c) Livestock – Livestock farmers and traders would be interested in buying market information although the system is not available.

Non Price information

The NMISs should collect complementary non-price information such as deflators, transport and storage costs and trade at border crossings. This information is necessary for further analysis of the market situation and inter-regional trade opportunities.

Deflators, such as the consumer price index, would allow the NMISs and food information units to compare prices over a period of time. A survey should be conducted once a year on transport and storage costs to facilitate comparison of prices on different markets. Information on tariffs needs to be regularly published.

Memorandum of understanding

In order to share information, the project should establish memorandum of understanding between;

- a) National MISs
- b) Intergovernmental Organisations
- c) International organisations
- a) Private sector

User need survey

It is vital to do a user need survey before, during the middle of the project, and after the project. This is quit often neglected. If so, the project manager tends to do what pleases himself. A user needs survey helps to address the needs of the clientele.

Appendix 1: People met during the evaluation

Week 1:	In Uganda, Mr Kleih alone, or accompanied by Mr Jagwe:
2 September:	Dr Shaun Ferris, Regional Coordinator, FOODNET, Kampala; Mr John Jagwe, Market Analyst, FOODNET; Mr Andrew K. Muganga, MIS Project Coordinator, FOODNET;
3 September:	Dr Berga Lemaga, Regional Coordinator, CIP-PRAPACE; ACDI / VOCA, Uganda; Mr B.F. (Bernie) Runnebaum, Country Representative; Mr Robert Komakech, Accounts and Auditing Technician; Mr Emmet Murphy, Monetization Manager.
4 September:	Mr Afzal Khan, Director, House of Quality Spices Ltd. Dr Ambrose Agona, Leader, Post-harvest Research Programme, Kawanda Agricultural Research Institute, Uganda; Mr Clive Drew, Chief of Party, USAID – IDEA Project; Mr Gordon and Mrs Julie Bell, Directors, Radio Lira and Busoga; Dr Rupert Best, Rural Agroenterprise Development Project, CIAT.
5 September:	Mr Martin Fowler, Sector Policy and Programme Adviser, MAAIF; Mr John Magnay, Chairman, Uganda Grain Traders Ltd; Dr Willie Odwongo, Director, PMA Secretariat, MAAIF; Mr Tom Mugisa, Programme Officer, PMA Secretariat, MAAIF; Mr James B.A. Whyte, Regional Co-ordinator, IITA-EARRNET.
6 September	Mr Opio Peter, Presenter, Radio Busoga, Jinja; Mr Muganza James, Market Info Collector, FOODNET, Jinja; Mr Moses Balikowa, Coordinator, NALG, Iganga; Farmer group, Nakasenyé, Iganga District.
7 September	Mr Andrew K Muganga, MIS Project Coordinator, FOODNET; Mr Geoffrey Okoboi, Micro-MIS, FOODNET;
8 September	Travel to Nairobi
Week 2:	In Nairobi, Mr Kleih & Mr Imita
9 September	Dr Diana Putman, Head, REDSO/ESA, USAID; Mr Eric Johnson, Regional Trade Economist / Analyst, USAID; Mr Malingi Mukumbu, Economist, USAID; Mr Nick Maunder, Regional Representative FEWSNET.

- 10 September Dr Ann Stroud, Regional Coordinator, Africa Hills Initiative;
Dr Mukhebi, Director, Kenyan Agricultural Commodity Exchange;
Dr Seyfu Ketema, Director, ASARECA Secretariat, Entebbe;
Dr Adiel Nkonge Mbabu, Technical Officer–Planning, ASARECA Secretariat, Entebbe;
Dr Abdelmoneim Taha, Technical Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation, ASARECA Secretariat, Entebbe;
Professor Edward Karuri, Department of Food Technology and Nutrition, University of Nairobi.
- 11 September Mr John Mungai, Market Information Branch, Ministry of Agriculture, Nairobi;
Dr Shaun Ferris, Regional Coordinator, FOODNET.
- 13 September Debriefing at USAID – REDSO, Nairobi, with:
Dr Diana Putman, Head, REDSO/ESA, USAID
Mr Eric Johnson, Regional Trade Economist / Analyst, USAID
Mr Malingi Mukumbu, Economist, USAID.
- Travel to Kampala
- Week 3: In Kampala / Entebbe, Mr Kleih alone
- 18 September Debriefing at ASARECA Secretariat, Entebbe, with:
Dr Seyfu Ketema, Director, ASARECA Secretariat;
Dr Adiel Nkonge Mbabu, Technical Officer–Planning,
Dr Abdelmoneim Taha, Technical Officer, M & E,
Mr Nigel S. Price, Adviser, Regional Support Unit.
- 19 September Dr Francis Byekwaso, Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager, NAADS, Kampala,
Ms Alyce Nakagwa, Information & Communication Officer, NAADS, Kampala,
Debriefing with Mr J. Whyte, Prerepresentative, Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Centre, IITA, Kampala.

Appendix 2: Documents consulted for the review

- ASARECA (1997) Development of a Long Term Strategic Plan for Regional Agricultural Research in the Eastern and Central African Region. Entebbe, Uganda, 1997.
- Bunn J. M. (2000) Post-Harvest Operations Evaluation - Starch Processing Technology Development for Matilong Youth Mixed Farming Organisation (MYMFO) in Soroti and Katakwi Districts, Uganda, ACDI / VOCA.
- CRS – FOODNET/CIAT (September 2002) Learning Alliance Proposal on Rural Agro-Enterprise Development.
- Ferris R.S.B. and Robbins P. (1999), Stakeholders Meetings for Strengthening the Market Information Service in Uganda. Compiled report, IITA-FOODNET / CMIS.
- Ferris R.S.B., Collinson C., Wanda K., Jagwe J., and Wright P. (2001), Evaluating the Marketing Opportunities for Shea nut and Shea nut processed products in Uganda. Foodnet – NRI report.
- Ferris R.S.B., Okoboi G., Crissman C., Ewell P. and Lemaga B (2001), Study on Performance and Growth Prospects of Irish Potatoes as a Component for the Development of Strategic Exports in Uganda, Report prepared by IITA-FOODNET, CIP, PRAPACE.
- Ferris R.S.B. and Muganga A. eds (2001) Technical Support for Market Information in East Africa – Draft report, Summary of papers and proceeding of a workshop held in Nairobi, October 2001.
- Ferris R.S.B., Jagwe J., Karuri E., Okoboi G., Namanya M. and Lwanga C. (2002), Foodnet Annual Report for the Third NPP Consultative Meeting, 13 – 17 May 2002, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Ferris, R.S.B., (April – June 2002), Globalisation and Liberalisation: Which way forward for the Region? Article in ASARECA AgriForum No19, Entebbe.
- FOODNET (1999), First Interim Steering Committee Meeting, ILRI Campus, 8-10 November 1999.
- FOODNET (1999) An Agro-Enterprise project linking ASARECA commodity networks in market oriented research - A Project Proposal Submitted to USAID/REDSO/ESA by IITA. Document forming part of the FOODNET Contract.
- FOODNET (2000) Network Review and Programming Workshop, Antananarivo, Madagascar, July 2000.

FOODNET (2000) Projects Recommended for Approval by the Steering Committee, April 2000.

FOODNET (2001) Annual Highlights Report.

FOODNET (2001) Annual Report – Reporting Period – November 2000 to November 2001.

Kertland Wright P. (2002), Medicinal Plants in Uganda – An overview; IITA – FOODNET, Kampala.

Hanak E. and Dabat M.-H. (2001), Dossier Methodologiques – Atelier de formation en methodes et outils pour l’analyse filiere et l’analyse des politiques, CIRAD – BCEPA, Conakry.

Memorandum of Understanding between Ugandan National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) and the FOODNET Market Information Service Unit, IITA-ESARC (no date, not signed).

Ng’ang’a N.M., Wachira J. and P. Ewell (2002) Potato Market, Njabini to Nairobi – Who gets the consumers money? Foodnet Grant Project 9.

PhAction News, Number 4, May 2001.

Robbins P. and Ferris R.S.B (March 2002), The Impact of Globalisation on the Agricultural Sectors of East and Central African Countries, CMIS / IITA- FOODNET.

Robbins P. and Ferris R.S.B (March 2000), Design of a Market Information System to Support Small-scale Producers, Processors, and Traders. CMIS / IITA – FOODNET.

Tadesse M. (2002), Sweet Potato Marketing Survey in Wolaita Zone, Draft, Awassa, Ethiopia.

Ugandan Market Information Service (2002), Proposal submitted by IITA to ACDI/VOCA Title II Program’s Food Security Fund.

In addition, about 15 reports of FOODNET sponsored grant projects were consulted on FOODNET’s web page.

Appendix 3: Terms of Reference

Mid Term Evaluation of the FOODNET Project

The FOODNET project is currently at its mid way stage, which is an opportune moment to evaluate progress in terms of activities, areas of success and future focus. These terms of reference are intended to guide the review process. The review will be conducted in October 2002 and be completed within 2 weeks. The findings of the report should be available for consideration by the ASARECA CD Board, in the planned meeting to be held from 30 Sept-4th October, 2002. The review team will comprise two persons, a regional expert and an international expatriate expert. The selected candidates should have considerable experience and skills in the areas of market information, marketing, postharvest and information exchange.

FOODNET

The Foodnet project was developed as a cross-cutting network to assist the ASARECA commodity based networks in their shift towards greater market orientation and to identify possibilities for value addition to their products. The FOODNET proposal aimed to establish a network that would build research and development capacity in three areas, (i) agricultural marketing (ii) enterprise development and (iii) information exchange. A key objective of the project was also to develop more effective links between public research and the private sector. The evaluation team will be asked to assess the success of the FOODNET project in achieving these objectives with the following guidelines:-

General Objective: Carry out a review of FOODNET against the original objectives of the project and suggest the most suitable way forward in the light of the accomplishments so far achieved and the recently endorsed ASARECA consolidated conceptual framework.

Specific Objectives:-

1. Undertake a general review and analysis of the FOODNET strategy from establishment to the latest revisions in strategic directions. This should be done in regard to the long term strategic plan developed by ASARECA in 1997 and the recently endorsed ASARECA consolidated conceptual framework.
2. Provide a review of the project portfolio that FOODNET has funded under the competitive and commissioned grant schemes. The selection of these projects should be considered in regard to support for the strategic work outlined above.
3. Evaluate the quality of work being produced by the FOODNET project, in relation to other networks and the goals set out in the strategy.
4. Evaluate the “networking capacity” for the subject area that FOODNET is working on, compared with other commodity networks such as PRAPACE and programs such as ECAPAPA.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the training that has been developed in the areas of (i) Market analysis, (ii) Enterprise development and (iii) Website design and maintenance. Highlight areas that required further work and follow up activities that may be required in order to maximize the benefits of the training.
6. In regard to future direction, the review should analyze the conceptual framework that

was submitted by FOODNET to REDSO, in May, 2002, which outlines several new potential areas that FOODNET will undertake in the future. See listed changes overleaf. The analysis should include a prioritized list of the proposed areas of work, with comment on the relevance and potential for regional impact of the issues.

7. Provide a summary of comments from stakeholders within the steering committee, national partners, other networks and collaborating partners as to their expectations for future collaboration with FOODNET.
8. Provide an analysis of the planned scope of the work, in relation to impact achieved and future potential impact, such that the Network may use the reviewer's information in order to make decisions on future areas of focus for the next 2 years.

Conceptual Framework Submitted to REDSO in May 2002

The main changes requested in the FOODNET were to

1. **Market Information.** Increase work in the area of regional market information in partnership with FEWSNET and IGAD. In this case FOODNET would take a pro-active role in strengthening regional provision of market information. This would facilitate the producers and traders in the region and provide an avenue for ASARECA to interact more effectively with other regional organizations.
2. **Trade analysis.** Include trade policy analysis as an important element in the partnership with ECAPAPA, with a focus on WTO negotiations and the structures that Governments in the region need to establish in order to strengthen their capacity to make more informed decisions on policy positions related to trade at the national, regional and global levels.
3. **Loans:** Request for a change in the contractual agreement such that FOODNET will be able to provide loan guarantees to the private sector. This will avoid capital purchases by the project and enable a more venture capital approach to the project work. This is essential if research is to be more of a partner in agri-business development rather than a source of subsidy.
4. **Funding mechanisms:** Development of new funding mechanisms, whereby the private sector will be able to access funds to pay for public sector research. In this case, FOODNET would hold funds for research to a project which can only be used by research / development agencies, but the R4D agenda would be directed by the private sector.
5. **Shift to learning alliances:** Shift from short course capacity building approaches to long term learning alliances, with key partners, in the areas of market analysis, enterprise development and market information.